

(Pronounced: *She rab kyi pha rol du chin pai men ngag gi ten choe ngoen bar tog pai gyen zhe ja wai tshig leur je pa*)

The full title of the *Ornament* in English is:

The Verses and Chapters of what is Called the 'Ornament for Clear Realizations', a Quintessential Instruction Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom

The Tibetan translators added the title in Sanskrit in order to demonstrate the authenticity of the text and that it originated in Sanskrit.

HOMAGE BY THE TRANSLATORS

The full title of the *Ornament* is followed by the line of homage given by the Tibetan translators who translated the *Ornament* from Sanskrit into Tibetan:

I prostrate to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The homage by the translators is not actually part of the *Ornament* taught by Maitreya but was added later. The Tibetan translators paid homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in order to accumulate merit needed for accomplishing temporary goals (such as successfully translating the text) and for accomplishing ultimate goals (such as attaining full enlightenment).

Additionally, the homage presents the reader with the principal subject matter of the text. Due to a decree passed by a former Tibetan king, many Tibetan translators traditionally pay homage to particular entities in order to reveal which of the three trainings is the principal subject matter of the text:

- a) When the principal subject matter of the text is ethics/morality, the translators pay homage to the omniscient mind of a Buddha.
- b) When the principal subject matter is meditational paths/concentrations, they pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
- c) And when the principal subject matter is wisdom, they pay homage to Manjushri.

Therefore, since the principal subject matter of the *Ornament* is meditational paths, the translators pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

HOMAGE OF THE ORNAMENT

Next starts the actual *Ornament* with Maitreya first paying homage and then explaining the purpose for composing the text.

Regarding the four lines of the homage, in the first line Maitreya pays homage to wisdom by way of describing it as the "Sublime Mother" of the four types of Aryas. In the remaining three lines he pays homage to the three types of wisdom, i.e. the three knowers, by revealing their different qualities:

I prostrate to the Sublime Mother of Buddhas and of the assembly of Hearers and Bodhisattvas

*Who through the **knower of bases** leads Hearers seeking pacification to complete peace;*

*Who through the **knower of paths** causes those benefitting migrators to achieve the aims of the world;*

*And who through possession of which (i.e. through possession of the **exalted knower of aspects/** the omniscient mind) the Subduers set forth the varieties having all aspects. [1]*

Since wisdom gives rise to Arya beings, it is called the "Sublime Mother" of the four types of Aryas, i.e. of Hearer Aryas, Solitary Realizer Aryas, Bodhisattva Aryas, and Buddhas.

Also, due to its different qualities, wisdom can be further categorized into the three types of wisdom, i.e. the three knowers:

- (1) The knower of bases
- (2) The knower of paths
- (3) The exalted knower of aspects

1) *Knower of bases*

The knower of bases refers to the paths of Arya Hinayana trainees – Hearer Aryas and Solitary Realizer Aryas. Their main goal is the complete peace of self-liberation (liberation from samsara/cyclic existence), and they cultivate the knower of bases because it enables them to overcome afflictive obstructions (the obstructions to self-liberation) and attain the state of an Arhat.

2) *Knower of paths*

The knower of paths refers to the paths of Bodhisattva Aryas whose main goal is to help migrating sentient beings. Hence, Bodhisattva Aryas cultivate the knower of paths because it enables them to overcome cognitive obstructions (the obstructions to omniscience) and attain the state of a Buddha.

3) *Exalted Knower of Aspects*

The exalted knower of aspects refers to the omniscient minds of Buddhas, the possession of which enables Buddhas to give the varieties of different teachings revealing -- according to disciples' interests and predispositions -- all the paths of the three vehicles (i.e. of the Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicle).

Therefore the meaning of the verse of homage is:

[1] I, Maitreya, **prostrate to the Sublime Mother of Buddhas and of the assembly of Hearer Aryas, Solitary Realizer Aryas, and Bodhisattva Aryas,**
Who through the knower of bases leads Hearer Aryas and Solitary Realizer Aryas seeking pacification from Samsara to the complete peace of self-liberation,
Who through the knower of paths enables or causes those Bodhisattva Aryas who are benefitting migrator sentient beings to achieve the aim of the world, i.e. Buddhahood,
And who through possession of which (i.e. through possession of the exalted knower of aspects/the omniscient mind) the Subduer Buddhas set forth the varieties of different teachings which reveal all the aspects of the paths of the three vehicles.

Furthermore, there is a reason for the particular order in which Maitreya prostrates to the three knowers, i.e. there is a reason for Maitreya first prostrating to the knower of bases, then to the knower of paths, and lastly to the exalted knower of aspects. Panchen Sonam Drakpa explains in his *Decisive Analysis* that Maitreya's intent is to teach the students of the *Ornament* the order of engaging in Mahayana practice.

The knower of bases is associated with Hinayana/Fundamental Vehicle practices. Therefore, Mahayana trainees must first develop their minds in the practices that are common to the Hinayana/Fundamental Vehicle, for without those it is impossible to generate great compassion. Without great compassion, on the other hand, it is impossible to cultivate Bodhicitta, without Bodhicitta it is impossible to develop the knower of paths, and without knower of paths it is impossible to attain the knower of aspects.

Hence it is important to understand that is not possible to engage in effective Mahayana practice without first building a sound foundation in the practices associated with the Hinayana/Fundamental Vehicle.

THE PURPOSE FOR COMPOSING THE ORNAMENT

Following the homage, Maitreya explains the purpose for composing the *Ornament* in two verses:

*The paths of the exalted knower of all aspects
Are what the teacher explained here;
That which is not experienced by others,
And has the nature of the ten Dharma activities. [2]*

*The meaning of the sutras is placed within one's mindfulness.
Then those with intelligence will see.
Therefore, "easily realizing"
Is the purpose of this composition. [3]*

The meaning of these two verses is:

[2] **The teacher**, the Buddha, **explained here** in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **the paths** leading to enlightenment, i.e. the paths leading to **the exalted knower of aspects** - the knower that **has the nature** of or is characterized by the **ten Dharma activities** (the ten topics) and **which is not experienced by others** such as non-Buddhists, Hearers and Solitary Realizers.

[3] **The meaning of the** *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **is placed** within the trainee's **mindfulness** through repeated study and contemplation. **Then those with intelligence will come to see** the meaning of these sutras. **Therefore, "easily realizing** the meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **is the purpose of this composition**, the *Ornament for Clear Realization*.

